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THE

WISE MAN OF THE EAST;

OR,

THE APPARITION OF

ZOROASTER,

THE SON OF OROMASES,

TO THE

THEATRICAL MIDWIFE

OF LEICESTER-FIELDS.

A SATIRICAL POEM.

Heu mihi ! qualis erat ! quantum mutata !

VIRGIL.

How chang'd, alas ! from her, whoſe comic page,
With native humour fraught, enrich'd the ſtage :
Who nobly dar'd to higher hopes aſpire,
And ſoar ſublime on Fancy's Muſe of fire !
Now ſtoops to ſervile toils, and baſely deigns
To threſh the litter of another's brains !

BY THOMAS DUTTON, A.M.
AUTHOR OF THE LITERARY CENSUS, &c.

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PREFACE.

THE preſent degraded ſtate of the Engliſh drama ; the little encouragement held out to the native genius of the country—nay I ought rather to ſay the *actual conſpiracy* formed againſt it by the extravagant and ſenſeleſs patronage of German literature, to the neglect of our own—the infatuation for the incoherent rhapſodies of Kotzebue ; the mercantile negotiation lately opened between the managers of our theatres, on the one part, and that inflated German play-wright, on the other, for a regular ſupply of his neweſt manuſcripts ; the *importation-contract*, duly ſigned, ſealed, and delivered on both ſides of the water, for overſtocking the theatrical market with foreign wares ; the ſanction given to this vile monopoly by the co-operation of ſome of our reſpectable dramatic writers—reſpectable as to their talents, but mercenary in their practice ; the

the incapacity and venality of our periodical vehicles of criticiſm—all theſe cauſes, meeting and combined together, loudly demand the aid of honeſt ſatire, and the intervention of upright, dauntleſs criticiſm—of criticiſm, unwarped by popular prejudices, and reckleſs of the deſpotiſm of a pompous name—to reſcue genius from the contamination of falſe taſte, and the tyranny of a foreign uſurper.

Aware, that elaborate criticiſm, unaccompanied with humour, and ſtript of the embelliſhments of verſe, would, from being of too grave a nature to obtain a general peruſal, not meet the magnitude and extent of the evil complained of, the author of the preſent production has had recourſe to the aſſiſtance of the comic and ſatiric Muſe; and curvetting into the flowery regions of Fancy, has employed the machinery of the poetic world, to give a more pleaſing and prepoſſeſſing introduction to his critical remarks.

Perſuaded

Perſuaded of the good ſenſe and cultivated underſtanding of the fair writer, whoſe late theatrical production forms the ground-work of the preſent performance, the author labours under no dread of giving umbrage to that intelligent lady (whoſe talents no perſon can hold in higher eſtimation than himſelf) by the harmleſs pleaſantry in which he has occaſionally permitted his Muſe to indulge. He has likewiſe, as the reader will perceive, made uſe of that lady's agency as the vehicle of ſome juſt ſatire on the falſe taſte of ſeveral co-temporary writers of reputed celebrity. Firmly attached to that part of the literary creed, which denies *ſex to genius*, he as little grants, as the lady in queſtion can ſtand in need of it, the validity of that plea, which the ingenious author of the Epilogue to the New Comedy advances in her favour to ſoften the rigours of criticiſm. He has acted uprightly and from principle; and he now makes his appearance before the tribunal of the public, with the calm compoſure and unruffled tranquillity of a good conſcience.

THE

WISE MAN OF THE EAST;

OR

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ZOROASTER,

THE SON OF OROMASES, &c.

PART THE FIRST.

STRETCH'D on her downy bed of ſpotleſs fame,
In gentle ſlumbers lay th' obſtetric dame.
With recent triumph ſwell'd her conſcious breaſt,
And ſelf-complacence lull'd her mind to reſt.

Still crowded houſes in her dreams appear;
Still thund'ring plaudits vibrate on her ear
In bright ſucceſſion paſs before her ken
The laurell'd trophies of her matchleſs pen;
Novels and Dramas march in long* array,
Gay as the ſcene that *clos'd* her "Wedding Day!"

Gay,

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* The following, I believe, is an accurate liſt of Mrs. INCHBALD's literary productions:

I'll tell you What — —	*A Comedy*
Such Things are — —	*ditto*
Every one has his Fault — —	*ditto*
The Wedding Day — —	*ditto*
Wives as they were, and Maids as they are	*ditto*
The Mogul Tale — —	*A Farce*
Appearance is againſt them — —	*ditto*
The Widow's Vow — —	*A Tranſlation*
The Midnight Hour — —	*ditto*
Animal Magnetiſm — —	*ditto*
The Child of Nature — —	*ditto*
The Married Man — —	*ditto*
Next-door Neighbours — —	*ditto*
The Simple Story — —	*A Novel*
Nature and Art — —	*ditto*
Lovers' Vows Wiſe Man of the Eaſt	*German Metamorphoſes, from Kotzebue.*

Gay, as the "Child of Nature" in full power;
Or "Lovers' Vows" rehears'd at "Midnight-Hour!"
But chief, and beſt-belov'd, as lateſt born,
She ſees her CUNNING-MAN the ſcene adorn;
In Eaſtern majeſty he ſtruts along,
The gaze and wonder of the gaping throng!
Th' enchanting viſion fires her eager brain,
For female boſoms will at times feel vain;
And thrice, like Philip's ſon, ſhe "ſlew the ſlain*!"

As brooding thus the ſleeping matron lies,
And rides on Fancy's wing th' Olympic ſkies;
Where, worthy found with demi-gods to rove,
She quaffs the nectar of imperial Jove!
In conclave ſage with ancient writers ſits,
And "quizzes" all the Sanhedrim of wits!

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* — The King grew vain,
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he ſlew the ſlain!
DRYDEN'S *Alexander's Feaſt.*

A ſudden motion ſhakes the lofty room,
A ſudden flaſh of light diſpels the gloom;
Conſeſt before her ſtands the Indian Sire,
Envellop'd in a blaze of * harmleſs fire!
Great Zoroaſter! who in early date
Firſt magic ſpells explor'd and read the book
of Fate!

Rous'd by th' intruſion from her trance
profound,
The dame aſtoniſh'd caſts her eyes around;
Nor

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* Zoroaſter, that he might the more effectually dedicate himſelf to contemplation, and the ſtudy of Nature, ſequeſtered himſelf, in the early part of his life, from the intercourſe with mankind. On his return to ſociety, a fiery meteor deſcended from the heavens, and envelloped him, like the angel in the burning buſh, without doing him the ſlighteſt injury, as an evidence of his divine miſſion. This miraculous event being made known, the king of the country, accompanied by the principal nobility and officers of ſtate, went forth to do him homage. Zoroaſter repaid their civilities by inſtructing them in the worſhip of the Gods, and ſelected a choſen number of diſciples, whom he formed into a hierarchy, under the denomination of Magi.

Nor yet releas'd from Fancy's ſtrong control,
Her ſleeping viſions ſtill poſſeſs her ſoul.
Full of her new-born play, ſhe deems the ſage
The * pſeudo-necromancer of the ſtage.
Straightway her cheeks aſſume a deeper red;
With decent care ſhe tucks her limbs in bed:
Con-

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* The part of the *Wiſe Man of the Eaſt*, in Mrs. INCHBALD's Anglo-German comedy of that name, is aſſigned to Mr. MUNDEN. The error which the fair adapter of Kotzebue's ill-digeſted play commits in miſtaking the perſon of her ghoſtly viſitor for the comic repreſentative of *Ava Thoana*, is eaſily accounted for by the deep impreſſion which that character is ſuppoſed to have made upon her mind; her new drama forming, agreeably to the old adage, the ſubject both of her *waking* and her *ſleeping* thoughts:

Tempore nocturno volvuntur vota diurna.

Mr. SHERIDAN, ſhortly after the production of his far-famed *Pizarro*, acted from the ſame impulſe, when apologizing to a friend for the neglect of his promiſe, he added *mental* to *corporeal* receſſion from his duty; and, forgetful that he was a member of the Britiſh Senate, adopted the country of his theatrical hero, and actually commenced his letter with; "Dear Sir, As I am a *Peruvian!* &c."

Conceals from gaze profane the charms that deck
Her heaving boſom and her iv'ry neck;
That boſom, where the Loves and Graces ſport;
Where Venus * Erycina holds her court!
That neck, which far exceeds in pearly ſhow
The Parian marble, or the drifted ſnow!
What, though wiſe †AVA may intend no harm?
Sure female modeſty muſt take alarm!
Such charms might even anchorites inſpire,
And light afreſh the flames of wild deſire:
Might thaw the frozen breaſt of palſied age,
And hoary ſaints provoke to lawleſs rage.

Beſides

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* A title given to Venus from mount Eryx, in Sicily, on which formerly ſtood a temple conſecrated to that Goddeſs, under the name of Erycina. The women inhabiting the adjacent diſtrict were held in high repute for their perſonal attractions; a diſtinction which travellers inform us they retain over the reſt of the Sicilian ladies to the preſent day.

† *Ava Thoana*, the pretended Indian Philoſopher in the new comedy, perſonated, as we have already obſerved, by Mr. MUNDEN. As we ſhall have frequent occaſion to allude to the ſeveral characters introduced in the *Wife Man*

Beſides—ſhould ſuch a *tête-à-tête* be known—
By MUNDEN caught in bed, and all alone!
What would not buſy ſcandal buzz about?
What would not prudes believe beyond a doubt?
For ſurely MUNDEN is not beauty-proof;
Nor form'd by nature long to ſtand aloof!
Perhaps, has nought of JOSEPH but the name!
Perhaps, may dearly love a bit of game!

If

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of the Eaſt, it may not be inexpedient, for the ſake of perſpicuity, to ſubjoin a liſt of the *Dramatis Perſonæ*.

Ava Thoana, the pretended Indian, but, as it afterwards appears, the father of young Clarenceforth,	Mr. MUNDEN.
Young Clarenceforth,	Mr. LEWIS.
Mr. Metland,	Mr. MURRAY.
Enſign Charles Metland,	Mr. H. JOHNSTON.
Bankwell,	Mr. DAVENPORT.
Timothy Starch,	Mr. KNIGHT.
Lawley,	Mr. WADDY.
Sir Richard Chances,	Mr. CLAREMONT.
Lady Mary Diamond,	Mrs. DAVENPORT.
Mrs. Metland,	Mrs. JOHNSON.
Ellen Metland,	Miſs MURRAY.
Rachel Starch,	Mrs. MATTOCKS.
Ruth Starch,	Mrs. H. JOHNSTON.

If right I read his rolling eye, forſooth
The cunning rogue may have a lick'riſh tooth!
This thought with deeper bluſhes dyes her cheek,
And for a-while denies the power to ſpeak;
Till reſolute at length ſhe ſilence broke,
Thrice hemm'd to clear her throat, and thus *LUCINA ſpoke:

Say, daring mortal! whom my magic pen
Enroll'd among the tribe of CUNNING-MEN!
Whom

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* Lucina, in the Roman Mythology, was the name given to Diana in her official capacity, as the tutelary Goddeſs of pregnancy; females in that ſituation being more immediately ſubject to the influence of the moon, of which planet Diana was the repreſentative.

Rite maturos aperire partus,
Lenis Ilithyia, tuere matres;
Sive tu Lucina probas vocari,
Seu Genitalis.

HOR. Carmen Seculare.

The appropriation of the title of Lucina to Mrs. INCHBALD, in reference to the part ſhe acts as *midwife* to the prolific Muſe of Kotzebue, muſt be acknowledged ſtrictly juſt and merited.

Whom with a wizard's wand and garb rever'd
I arm'd, and added graceful length of beard!
Whom from the fartheſt Eaſt my griffin bore,
And ſafely landed on Old England's ſhore;
Tranſported from Camboyda's * ſweltring heat
To Covent-Garden's cool and *chaſte* retreat:
There planted in a ſoil to *virtue* dear,
Where love perennial blooms throughout the year!
Where nymphs, more fair than † *Houries* of the ſky,
Sport their fair ſhapes, and roll the melting eye!

Say,

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* *Ava Thoana* is expreſsly introduced to young *Clarence-forth* as a native of Cambodia. That the climate of that kingdom muſt be tolerably warm, the reader will eaſily infer, when he conſiders that it lies between 9 to 15 degrees North latitude.

† The *Houries* in the Mahometan ſyſtem are the fair damſels deſigned for the companions of the faithful in Paradiſe. As women, according to the Koran, are not allowed to be poſſeſſed of ſouls, theſe beautiful Shunamites are not ſuppoſed to be the glorified bodies of the Sultanas with whom

 they

Say, by what fiend impell'd with purpoſe rude
Thou dar'ſt upon my privacy intrude?
Why thus abuſe thy delegated power?
Why in my chamber at this lonely hour?
For nought, I'm well aſſur'd, but magic ſkill
Could gain thee entrance here againſt my will.
With wiſe precaution (as I always do)
The door I double-lock'd, the bolt I drew.
No ſecret paſſages this houſe contains;
No vaults where hideous ſpectres clank their chains;
No hidden ſtaircaſe; no conceal'd receſs,
Where rakes may lie in watch, whilſt I undreſs;
No ruin'd galleries, which retortive bend,
And lead the wanderer to—the gallery's end!
No ſubterraneous path to aid thy flight,
And ſpue thee up from darkneſs unto light;
Such

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they converſed on earth; but are a new race of females, formed for the expreſs purpoſe of ſolacing the true believers with their blandiſhments, to which end they are endowed with tranſcendant beauty, and undecaying charms.

Such as Udolpho's myſtic walls may boaſt,
Where fierce Montoni lodg'd his murd'rous
hoſt;
Where in a pantry, or a cellar ſtor'd,
Whole armies might encamp, and bed and
board.
Where through a hundred gates, like Thebes
of yore,
Embattled ſquadrons ruſh, and neighing
courſers pour!
Not ſuch in Leiceſter-fields our buildings riſe,
Where pinch'd for room, to guard againſt
ſurpiſe,
We find one outer door will for one houſe
ſuffice.
Hence plainly follows, as thou muſt perceive,
Thou com'ſt by magic, and without my leave.

Then ſpeak thy purpoſe—quickly let me
know,
Whether as *friend* thou com'ſt?—or com'ſt as
foe?

If, bent on miſchief, and with ſoul accurſt,
Thou ſeek'ſt to act a crime, of crimes the worſt!
Know, though alone, without or ſword or ſpear—
I dare thy malice; nor thy proweſs fear.

Haſt thou not heard how once by man purſued,
My * Drury-Lane aſſailant I ſubdued?
What, though no boiling kettle near me ſtand?
What, though no ſcalding *tea-pot* be at hand?
Yet

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* Mrs. INCHBALD, then Miſs SIMPSON, in her probation for the ſtage, was introduced by the gentleman whom ſhe afterwards married, to the acquaintance and *promiſed* patronage of Mr. D——, of Drury-lane, the joint proprietor and acting manager of a country theatre. Mr. D——, ſtruck with her perſon, immediately engaged her as his pupil; and for ſome time appeared very zealous and ſincere in his offers of ſervice. But one evening throwing off the maſk, and diſcovering his real intentions, our incenſed heroine revenged the affront by diſcharging a baſon of ſcalding water—the tea-equipage very fortunately happening to be on the table—in the face and open boſom of the daring offender. Before Mr. D— had time to recover from his *painful* ſurprize, the lady had flown down ſtairs; and repairing

Yet weapons, well I ween, may ſtill be found
To bring ev'n MUNDEN's greatneſs to the ground!
Theſe hands, ſtill to their loving miſtreſs true,
Theſe hands ſhall beat and thump thee black and blue!
Theſe nails, which ſharp my fingers' ends encaſe,
Theſe nails ſhall maul and ſcarify thy face!
Shall irreſiſtibly aſſail thy noſe,
And blood ſhall follow, as I deal my blows!

This

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pairing to Mr. INCHBALD, by whom ſhe had been recommended to Mr. D—'s tuition, related every circumſtance of the tranſaction. Mr. INCHBALD was ſenſibly hurt at the treatment ſhe had received, and ſuggeſted other modes of introduction to the ſtage; but finding her inflexible in her refuſal any longer to dance attendance on managers; after a pauſe of ſome length and ſerious import, he told her that he knew of no ſituation in which her virtue could be ſecure, except marriage. "True, Sir, (replied the lady), "but who will have me?"—"I will," returned Mr. INCHBALD, with animation;—"but perhaps you would not "accept of me." "Indeed, but I would, Sir, (rejoined the

This candleſtick upon thy ſounding crown
Shall beat the warlike tune of "*Derry Down!*"
Nor will my fury cool, nor anger* ceaſe,
But blows ſhall multiply, and kicks encreaſe;
'Till full revenge of all my wrongs I take;
Till ev'ry bone ſhall in thy carcaſe ache;
Till—mind and body both fatigued alike—
My drooping arm has loſt the power to ſtrike.

Home ſhalt thou go—if home thou canſt
regain—
In piteous plight, and rack'd with torturing
pain.

More

" the other,) and think myſelf eternally obliged to you." The bargain was inſtantly ſtruck, and in leſs than a week Mr. INCHBALD led the blooming, bluſhing damſel to the hymeneal altar.

* Nor will the God's awaken'd fury ceaſe,
But plagues ſhall ſpread, and funeral fires increaſe.
ILIAD, Book I. v. 121

More bruis'd and batter'd in each trembling joint,
Than hadſt thou fought the Dutch at Helder-point:
More gall'd thy ſhoulders, and more pinch'd thy ribbs,
Than if the mob miſtook thee for JANE GIBBS!
Or for the * MONSTER newly come to life;
Or for a flogging cull that trims his wife!
More filthy, naſty, foul, and black as pitch,
Than hadſt thou roll'd the kennel at Fleet-ditch;
More wet from head to tail—from neck to rump—
Than wert thou duck't at Covent-Garden pump;

Or

* The public prints inform us, that this female ſcare-crow, on ſome perſon aſſuming his character, has again made his appearance in the ſtreets of the metropolis. Several ladies, it ſeems, have been expoſed to his inſults; and one lady in particular had her ear nearly ſevered from the head by the cannibal.

Or dragg'd through ev'ry horſe-pond, deep and low,
From Hyde-Park-Corner to the town of Slough;
More diſmal with thy woeful length of face,
Than vagrants pelted round the market place.
More ſore thy ears, and, haply too, leſs ſound,
Than wert thou pillored at St. Giles's pound.

Then hold, raſh man, and timely warn'd, forbear;
And how?—and why?—thou hither cam'ſt, declare.

THE

WISE MAN OF THE EAST;

OR

THE APPARITION OF

ZOROASTER,

THE SON OF OROMASES, &c.

PART THE SECOND.

THE matron ceas'd,—and now for want of
breath,
Gaſping ſhe lay as in the arms of death:
Silent her tongue, though ſore againſt her
will;
But, even ſilent, ſeem'd to threaten ſtill.

Not that the dame, for modeſt merit known,
To* volubility of ſpeech was prone.
But here the cauſe was ſuch as well might claim
A louder tone, and kindle into flame.
A wicked foe, well-vers'd in magic-charm,
(So whiſper'd fear) her virtue ſought to harm;
That virtue, dearer than her life, her gold,
Which young ſhe kept, and means to keep when old!
This gave her tongue to roll without reſtraint,
Nor pauſe allow'd, nor reſt from loud complaint;
Till, nature ſinking—with a cloſing ſigh,
She ſtopt, *par-force*, and waited for reply.
Calm,

* The author is perfectly aware that loquacity is not to be ranked among the characteriſtics of his heroine. But allowances muſt be made for the jeopardy of the lady's ſituation; beſides, it ought to be conſidered, that, in her preſent extremity, ſhe had no *tea-pot* at hand to defend her virtue; as in the caſe of Mr. D—, already related.

Calm, with the ſober dignity of age,
And graceful ſtep advanc'd the Indian ſage.
His hand he motion'd; ſmooth'd his bearded chin,
Nor would—till ſure the dame had done—begin.
For Spirits never * interrupt a ſpeech,
Nor trench upon the forms good manners teach.

Hence,

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* To judge from modern manners—without the remoteſt reference to AUGUST LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES—impatience of ſpeech, among the poliſhed ſons of Europe, ſeems to form the criterion of civilization. The Northern tribes of America, and indeed moſt of thoſe nations which we ſtigmatize with the epithet of *ſavages* and *barbarians*, are rigidly punctilious in their obſervance of oratorial *etiquette*. So far from interrupting a ſpeaker on public occaſions in his harangue, no perſon riſes to reply, till his predeceſſor in debate has reſumed his ſeat, with the intervention of a ſilent pauſe of conſiderable duration. But the gentlemen of the Bar and Senate will no doubt be apt to attribute this decorum leſs to the good-ſenſe and good-manners of the Indians, than to a lack of eloquence and periwigs! As to the ladies, they are privileged beings in all communities.

Hence, though the dame might well prolix
appear,
He lent to all ſhe ſaid a patient ear:
And now he waited, pondering in his brain
Whether ſhe purpos'd to harangue again.

Convinc'd at length 'twas now his turn to
ſpeak,
He thus addreſs'd the dame in accents meek:

Deceiv'd by faint reſemblance to that
wight,
Who * *apes* the CUNNING-MAN by candle-
light—
Such faint reſemblance, as in dreſs might ſtrike
Not quite diſſimilar, nor quite alike;
Such as the valet for *My Lord* might paſs,
When in his maſter's clothes he ſees his laſs;
Such as a left-off robe might form between
A ruin'd Maid of Honour and a Queen———
Deceiv'd

* ERRATUM. Should be—*acts*.

Deceiv'd by * ſick-mens' dreams, and fancies vain,
The crude abortion of an idiot's brain!
On ſuch ſlight views, ſuch unſubſtantial ground,
A *Magus* with a *Mimic* you confound!
GREAT ZOROASTER!—Heav'n's eternal heir!
With JOEY MUNDEN, merry wag, compare!

For know, fair dame! and throw your fears away,
No lurking raviſher here prowls for prey;
No danger menaces your fame, or life;
The man you dread's at home and † hugs his wife!

In

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* —— velut ægri ſomnia, vanæ
Fingentur ſpecies; ut nec pes, nec caput uni
Reddatur formæ.

HOR. De Arte Poetica.

† This circumſtance the writer advances entirely on the authority of Zoroaſter: he does not pretend to vouch for the fact from his own knowledge.

In me you ſee the Arimaſpian Sire !
The * Stars' own progeny ! the ſon of fire !
Who viſit heav'n or earth with equal eaſe,
And die, and riſe † again, whene'er I pleaſe !
As fancy dictates, from its mortal bin,
I blow my ſpirit out, or ſuck it in !

This

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* *Zoroaſter*, according to ſome commentators, is a compound-word, literally ſignifying the *Offspring of the Stars*. By the ſame etymology, *Zorobabel* is ſaid to imply a perſon born at Babylon.

† Suidas very gravely informs us, that Zoroaſter poſſeſſed the miraculous power of breathing out his ſoul and inhaling it again as often as he pleaſed. Among other freaks and pranks, he once, it ſeems, took it into his head to expire ſuddenly in a fuller's ſhop. His friends being apprized of his deceaſe, came to fetch away his body ; but on their arrival the dead man was no where to be found. In this ſtate of uncertainty and ſuſpence reſpecting his fate, Zoroaſter kept his friends the full term of ſeven years ; at the expiration of which he returned to his home, ſhook hands with his acquaintance, and wrote a kind of politico-philoſophical poem, which was publiſhed under the title of *Arimaſpian Verſes*.

This of my perſon——next I ſhow, off-hand,
The manner *, *how*——the cauſe, *why*, here I ſtand.——
Pop thro' the key-hole with my pliant form
I bounc'd, like lightning, or the rattling ſtorm;
My ambient flame each groſſer part refin'd,
Nor was the ſmalleſt atom left behind.
Drawn by your fame, I hither wing'd my way
To ſcan the merits of—*a German Play!*

With more than magic charm this ſpeech addreſt
To care maternal ſooth'd the matron's breaſt.

What

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* The preciſion with which Zoroaſter frames his reply, in anſwer to the concluding interrogatory of LUCINA's ſpeech in the Firſt Part of this poem:

"And *how?* and *why?*—thou hither cam'ſt, declare."

is ſtrictly conſonant with the Oriental character. Homer's heralds and ſpeakers act exactly on the ſame principle, adhering almoſt to the very letter of the inſtructions with which they are charged.

What female heart might not ſuch homage move?
What female heart ſuch homage not approve?
Still * ring the grateful accents in her ears,
Sweet, as the muſic of the heavenly ſpheres!
Sweet, as to maids the virgin-vows of love,
Witneſs'd by none, except the cooing dove!
Sweet, as the favours Damon ſues to gain,
No watch, ſave † Cynthia and her ſtarry train!
As, friends eluding, thro' the conſcious grove
At midnight-hour the happy lovers rove!
Sweet, as the kiſſes which their raptures ſeal;
Or, ſweeter ſtill, the hymeneal peal—
When, as from church returns the ſimp'ring bride,
The bells proclaim the deed which night muſt hide!

Sweet,

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* The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him ſtill ſpeaking; ſtill ſtood fix'd to hear.
Paradiſe Loſt, B. VIII. v. 1.

† Nocte quidem, ſed *Luna* videt, ſed *ſidera* teſtes
Intendunt oculos.
Juvenal. Sat. VIII. v. 149.

Sweet, as to widows melting with deſire,
The *ſecond-rites* which authorize their fire!
Sweet, as to candidates for ſtage renown,
The plaudits which the hiſs of critics drown.
Sweet, as to thoſe who write, or * *dreſs* a play,
The fame and guineas which their toil repay.

Yet, though her boſom owns the pleaſing charm,
Nor fears of MUNDEN's lick'riſh tooth alarm!
Still, nicely delicate, her bluſhing cheek,
And quicken'd pulſe a virtuous ſoul beſpeak;
Nor could ſhe bear—oh! that ſhe could but ban!—
Ought that at ſuch a juncture look'd like *man!*
For, though a ſpirit, as it now appear'd,
Yet 'twas a ſpirit *male*, and wore a *beard!*
Add, that endued with necromantic power,
It wanted but the paſſion——*to devour!*

A real

* "She begs to anſwer only for the *dreſſing*."
Prologue to *The Wife Man of the Eaſt.*

A real ſorcerer, not a juggling cheat,
Like AVA, ſhuffling from his * boaſted feat.

And

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* The whole of *Ava Thoana*'s conduct and diſcourſe in his interviews with young *Clarenceforth*, both in the firſt and ſubſequent acts of *The Wiſe Man* till his final undiſguiſement, is avowedly calculated to impreſs the minds of the audience with the forth-coming appearance of a ſupernatural being. On his firſt introduction he expreſsly tells *Clarenceforth*, who holds the ſilly doctrine of ſupernatural agency in merited contempt, that "wiſer heads than his have "believed in ghoſts:"—and immediately adds,—"Whilſt I "was reciting a few words, to ſee *if* (ſo MUNDEN ſpeaks the part; but we have too high an opinion of the fair author's knowledge of idiomatic propriety to ſuppoſe ſhe could be guilty of this, and above a ſcore of grammatical errors ſtill more flagrant, which occur in the courſe of the repreſentation of the new Comedy—ſhe muſt have written *whether*) "I remembered the charm; the ſpirit of your late "father appeared *before* me"—*Query*. Was he contemplating himſelf a the time in a looking glaſs?—In a ſubſequent paſſage, in Act IV. he ſays, in reply to *Clarenceforth*'s urgent ſolicitation, that he would make good his boaſt of necromantic ſkill, and conjure up the ghoſt of his deceaſed father:—"You muſt be properly prepared, before your ſen-"ſual eyes can ſee an *airy form*, a *departed ſpirit!*"—This idea being invariably maintained and encouraged throughout the whole piece, the audience naturally expect to be gratified

And though the *Magus* promis'd very fair;
Do none act very foul that deeply ſwear?
But then his age!—he would not ſure be rude;
Yet many ancient men are very lewd!—
But

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tified with at leaſt a few necromantic tricks; with at leaſt the ſemblance of a ghoſt; with the reſuſcitation of the father of *Clarenceforth* in the perſon of a being diſtinct from the pretended ſorcerer. But *Ava Thoana*, inſtead of fulfilling his promiſe with the good faith even of a conjuror, has recourſe to ſhuffling, and by a kind of dramatic *coup-de-main*, diſappoints the expectations of the audience, who were led to look for a very different cataſtrophe, by appearing in *propria perſona*.

Such is the *denouement* of a play by the far-famed Kotzebue, even after it has paſſed through the grand alexipharmic and magic *filtering-ſtone* of Mrs. INCHBALD's brain! Extolled, admired, and almoſt *deified* (for he has been already baptized in this country, by the name of the *German Shakſpeare*), as is this ſelf-ſame Kotzebue; to me, I muſt candidly confeſs, he appears to be the General MACK of the Drama; and I make no doubt, when the preſent infatuation ſhall have in ſome meaſure ſubſided, and this redoubted German is oppoſed to our native dramatic forces, under the auſpices of ſound ſenſe and good taſte, he will experience ſimilar defeat, degradation, and diſgrace, with his *military* prototype. But more of this in the ſequel.

But—granting this the caſe—why need he
roam,
In queſt of female prey ſo far from home?
Do Indian climes no pretty faces boaſt?
No melting beauties grace the Georgian coaſt?
No blooming damſels, happy Perſia yield?
No maids, Circaſſia from her * tented field?
Whence Eaſtern courts and Baſhaws with three
tails!
Supply their *Harams* at the public ſales:
Ripe in untaſted charms, and youthful flame;
Leſs fair, leſs lovely——only than the dame!
Yet, will not oft abroad the lover range,
And *preſent* for a *diſtant* good exchange?
Spurn yielding beauty from his loathing arms,
To feaſt and riot in forbidden charms?

Might

* The *Hordes* of Circaſſian Tartars live chiefly in tents, removing from place to place for the benefit of paſturage. Their females are in high eſtimation for their perſonal charms: on which account the Eaſtern ſeraglios are chiefly ſupplied with young virgins from this and the neighbouring country of Georgia.

Might not her virtue—not that chaſte renown,
Which forms the faireſt jewel in her crown!
Might this not tempt the hoary ſage to ſin,
To ſeize by force, what prayers could never win?
As moſt we prize what deareſt we obtain,
And ſcorn the triumph, which we cheaply gain!

Thus in her mind the dubious cauſe ſhe weighs:
Nor this, now that way, wild conjecture ſtrays;
Now hopes and fears alternate fall and riſe;
Alternate brighten and bedim her eyes;
Till, faintly ſounding on the echoing gale,
The words—"*A German Play!*"—decide the ſcale.

THE

WISE MAN OF THE EAST;

OR

THE APPARITION OF

ZOROASTER,

THE SON OF OROMASES, &c.

PART THE THIRD.

COLLECTED now the matron undiſmay'd
Summons her native courage to her aid;
Then—mindful of her ſoul—with pious care
Ejaculates a ſhort, but fervent prayer;

Which

Which by her grandam taught, with potent
charm
Defends from witchcraft and from ghoſtly
harm!
The ſame which BROTHERS at his * *country-*
ſeat
Fails not each morn and ev'ning to repeat!
Which † POOR-HELP hums to ſaints devout
that draw
For texts of ſcripture and for crowns of ſtraw!
This

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* Iſlington mad-houſe, to which place this anointed prophet has very properly been ſent for the *benefit of the air*.

† The aſſumed appellation of another mad prophet, who diſpenſes ghoſtly comfort in the vicinity of Bloomſbury-market. It is the practice of this fanatic to preſent his viſitors, for a proper fee, with choice ſcraps of ſcripture and Jeruſalem crowns made of ſtraw, which they dip for out of a little bag, after the manner of our itinerant retailers of ginger-bread-nuts at country-fairs. One of theſe precious Jeruſalem-crowns, I underſtand, was beſtowed with great ſolemnity upon a certain illuſtrious perſonage, after the loſs of what the generality of my readers would be apt to think an infinitely more valuable conſideration.

This office done—to Heav'n ſhe leaves the reſt,
And boldly thus the Indian Sire addreſt :

Great ſpirit of that god-like ſage of yore !
Whoſe magic form I never ſaw before ;
Though oft thy name in theſe delighted ears
Has grateful ſounded in my infant years :
Has INCHBALD's fame then reach'd the lofty ſkies ?
And is ſhe *deified* before ſhe dies ?
Do Gods and Demi-gods on earth deſcend,
To ſee the dramas which this hand has penn'd?
Do bleſt Immortals on their thrones peruſe
The claſſic works of INCHBALD's modeſt Muſe?
Does ZOROASTER hither wing his way,
To learn how I can *dreſs* a German Play ?

* Or com'ſt Thou rather from ſome foreign land,
To claim the aid of my obſtetric hand ?—
That

* Should any of my readers be apt to object to the length of theſe ſpeeches, as likely to protract the interview between Zoroaſter

That land, which from a ſtock that never fails,
Supplies our own with plays and nurſery tales!
Has that *Great Man*, behind whoſe ſev'n-fold ſhield,
INCHBALD has *won*, nor doubts to * *keep* the field!
Whoſe Muſe with num'rous litter breeds apace,
Faſter than conies, or the ſwiniſh race!
Prolific, as the falling dews of night,
That bring forth *toad-ſtools* with the morning light!
Say, has his brain another bantling bred?
Say, is his genius brought again to-bed?

And

Zoroaſter and the heroine of this poem beyond the *canonical* hours preſcribed for ghoſtly viſitations, I muſt beg leave to remind them, that the nights have now nearly reached their greateſt length.

* The writer of the *harmleſs* prologue to *The Wife Man of the Eaſt* expreſsly tells us, that,

— "behind Great Kotzebue's ſhield,
"The Lady gain'd, and hopes to *keep* the field."

And com'ſt thou my aſſiſtance to obtain
To act the *midwife* to his teeming brain?
To lick the cub, ill-ſhapen, I confeſs,
And bring it forward in an Engliſh dreſs?
To reap freſh laurels for my learned brows,
Fairer than thoſe, which "* crown'd my laſt
year's Vows!"

A pauſe enſued—for now the matron's voice
Not, as before, from *hoarſeneſs*, ſtopt from
choice;
For, modeſt to a fault! it griev'd the dame
To blow herſelf the trumpet of her fame.
Silent ſhe lay, and—what may well appear
A wonder—leſs diſpos'd to *talk* than *hear!*

The ſage beholds her with unfeign'd ſur-
prize,
And ſcarce believes the witneſs of his eyes.
Thought-

* Parodied from the Prologue.

Thoughtful the fact he ponders o'er and o'er,
As tho' he ne'er had ſeen the like before!
Till, by proof poſitive from doubt releas'd,
He owns, that miracles not yet have ceas'd!
And now a ſpeech, leſs complimental fram'd,
Than bluntly honeſt, thus his thoughts pro-
claim'd:

'Tis true, fair dame!—he cries—I came
from far,
And hither came, directed by your ſtar!—
As late the earth I travers'd, to and fro',
To learn the neweſt news of things below;
To hear of battles fought, and warriors ſlain;
For little elſe your public prints contain!
To read of * famine, murder, plague, and peſt;
And what *man-butcher* acts his part the beſt!
(Such

* "From plague, peſtilence, and famine; from battle "and murder, and from ſudden death: *Good Lord! deli-* "*ver us.*"

Litany of the Church of England.

(Such is my wont—as often up and down,
Inviſible, I ſaunter through the town—)
As thus the ſtreets I pac'd in ſtudious thought,
My eye inquiſitive your play-bill caught:
The title ſtrait my whole attention drew—
A *wiſe man* in a play is ſomething *new!*
Nay—more my curious wonder to engage—
My fellow-countryman—an *Eaſtern Sage!*
And in a *comedy* to act his part,
With all of INCHBALD's * *Nature*, all her *Art!*
What could I, Madam, under this diſguiſe—
What, but a libel on my ſect ſurmize?
Perhaps, myſelf, or pupil of my ſchool,
Exhibited to play the public fool!
Perhaps, the whole artillery of your wit
Employ'd to force our *Magi* to ſubmit!
Perhaps, maſk'd batt'ries, on a given ſign,
Ready to open, and mow down our line!

This

* Alluding to *Nature and Art*, the title of one of Mrs. INCHBALD's novels.

This thought might well alarm, and fear create,
Not for myſelf, but for my followers' fate.
'Tis true, I might with eaſe, if ſo diſpos'd,
Your ſchemes have baffled, and your hopes fore-clos'd;
Might, with a word, have caus'd my fire to fall,
And burn up actors, audience, houſe, and all!
Not even yourſelf, my fury could withſtand,
Had I unbar'd my dread, avenging hand!
But, ſcorning to employ ſuch magic force,
I left your play to take its natural courſe.

Well, then, I ſaw your play, and muſt declare
I found my fears were vain, and light as air!
Found, what your bills a *comedy* proclaim,
Had nothing of *Thalia*, but the name.
No point, no force, no humour could I trace,
To raiſe a ſmile, and dimple o'er the face.
Some lame attempts, indeed, at wit you tried;
But lame they were, and nerveleſs turn'd aſide.

No

No whizzing arrows through the air reſound;
But ſpent they fall, and * harmleſs ſtrike the ground!

Your *(a) Quaker-ſcenes* a barren wit betray,
And *Rachel Starch* had nearly damn'd your play.

Even

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* ——— telumque imbelle ſine ictu.
VIRG. Æneid. II. v. 544.

(*a*) A lamer attempt at wit, coupled with exploded prejudices, and a ſpirit of illiberality, unworthy the *boaſted illumination*, either of the author, or of the adapter of the piece, I never witneſſed, than the *New Comedy* preſents throughout the whole of the under-plot. With the exception of two or three repartees, which went off with a kind of *meretricious eclât*, not on account of their *humour*, but their *groſſneſs*; the ſeveral ſcenes in which the reſpectable ſociety of the Quakers—reſpectable, I call them, not in reference to their religious tenets (that conſideration I wave *in toto*), but highly reſpectable, as meritorious members of civil community—are poſitively *dragged forth*—why, and wherefore, the author only knows; and perhaps not even the author; for the intereſt of the piece does not require their appearance—with the exception, I repeat it, of a few *indelicate equivoques*, diſtilled from *Joe Miller's* jeſt-book, theſe

Even at that awful criſis—mark the deed!
I ſtood your beſt of friends—a friend in need!
Clapp'd *(b)* with both hands, and bade the
play proceed.

Nor

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theſe ſcenes exhibit a heterogeneous maſs of the dulleſt, vileſt, the moſt infamous and ſcandalous traſh, that ever diſgraced the modern ſtage. In this light they were very properly regarded by the informed part of the audience, who expreſſed their diſapprobation on its firſt production, in ſuch loud, reiterated, and prolonged murmurs, that the performance was for a conſiderable time ſuſpended; and but for the ſucceſsful *ruſe de guerre* of Mrs. MATTOCKS, who immediately *cut* (to uſe a technical term) from the vapid *farrago* of ribaldry ſhe was prepared to utter, into a high-ſtown panegyric on the character of the Britiſh merchant, there is no doubt but the actors would have been fairly hiſſed off the ſtage. Theſe unequivocal omens of condemnation, iſſued under the edict of good-ſenſe and good-taſte, on the part of the audience, produced, as might naturally be expected, conſiderable curtailments on the ſecond repreſentation. But, to render the improvement complete, it would be neceſſary to new-model the whole of this incongruous under-plot. In its preſent ſtate, it poſſeſſes only the *negative* merit of not being ſo tedioufly execrable as in its original form.

The conſideration of this ſubject leads me to offer a few remarks on the conduct of our diurnal prints, with reſpect

to

Nor can I, Madam, more your hero prize,
Your *cunning-man*—I cannot call him *wiſe !*

Ill

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to what they affect to call their *theatrical critiques.* The rapid, and uniformly (even with the regularity of ſyſtem) progreſſive decline of good taſte, ſound-judgment, cultivated critical *acumen*, and elegance, indeed I might rather ſay, *correctneſs* of ſtyle—for our journals are bungled together with a want of even grammatical knowledge of the language—in our public news-papers, diſcovers itſelf every day more glaringly. Nor is this, indeed, to be wondered at, when we reflect into what hands many of theſe *ephemeral* vehicles of information have fallen ! not to mention the conſequences of *ſiniſter influence,* which acting in co-operation with dullneſs, ſelf-defeating avarice, and low-cunning ſordidneſs of mind, beats up for recruits among the moſt deſpicable refuſe of the Grub-ſtreet literary ſquad. Some of theſe I know, who can ſcarcely lay claim to the education of a common pariſh-ſchool ; yet are as big, withall, in their own conceit, and, what is more to the purpoſe, in the eſtimation of their equally-ſtupid employers, as the moſt approved veterans of literature :—ſuch is the impartial diſpenſation of Providence, which kindly proportions our vanity to our ignorance ! Hence they are at once as light and as inflated as a bladder: hence, totally unconſcious of ſuch a principle as critical integrity, they experience no revolting ſenſations of ingenuous ſhame in the traffic of literary proſtitution :—they require not even *management* on the part of the perſon who needs their aſſiſtance in the dirty ſervices of venality.

Ill were that name beſtow'd, where whim and freak
A childiſh ſoul and idiot's brain beſpeak;
One,

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nality. Hence we ſee the moſt rank and fulſome encomiums paſſed in our *newspaper-critiques* upon the vile abortions, particularly in the line of *after-pieces*, which the ſtage ever and anon vomits forth, and of which the preſent ſeaſon has not been deſtitute. Men of real genius and acquirements will neither condeſcend to turn *toad-eaters* to witleſs play-wrights; nor will they be perſuaded to act in concert with ſuch diſgraceful auxiliaries.

Such being the caſe, it is the leſs a matter of ſurprize, that even the diſgraceful ribaldry above animadverted upon, ſhould meet with advocates and ſupporters among the manufacturers of our public prints; particularly in one paper, equally notorious for its dulneſs and its arrogance. I muſt, however, do the Editors of *The True-Briton* and *The Morning Poſt* the juſtice to declare, that they diſplayed, in their reports of the new play, an adequate ſenſe of moral rectitude, as well as of the reſpect due to their own characters, as public cenſors, by reprobating this vile compound of dulneſs and illiberality with the warmth and honeſt indignation it ſo eminently deſerves. *The Morning Poſt*, in particular, has a remark, for which I give the writer great credit. He obſerves, "that as the members of the ſociety "of Quakers are not in the habit of frequenting the "theatres, it becomes the duty of public writers to come "forward in their vindication, whenever they are wantonly

One, who from mere (*c*) caprice muſt paſs for dead;
And leaves his injur'd friend to beg his bread!
Who

" dragged forth to public ridicule, in their abſence; and " *cowardly*, as well as *illiberally*, held up to public animad- " verſion, without any means of defence on their part."— Indeed I muſt add, that in the department of theatrical criticiſm, the *True Briton* and *Morning Poſt* maintain a decided ſuperiority over their diurnal co-temporaries.

As a proof, however, that the general charge of *venality* which I have brought againſt our public prints is not vague and ill-founded; it deſerves to be noticed, that theſe very two papers, after ſo unequivocally ſtating their diſapprobation of the introduction of this ribaldry upon the Quakers, inſerted in common with the reſt of their compatriots, a *puff-paragraph*, intimating, that " a *very illiberal and un-* " *juſt report* had been propagated againſt the author of the " *New Comedy*, as though ſhe had intended a ſevere cenſure " on that reſpectable ſociety the Quakers, &c." And this paragraph evidently paid for by the theatre, for it was *verbatim* the ſame in all the prints, appeared in the *Morning Poſt* and *True Briton* of the ſame day, which contained the identical report, here ſaid to be highly *illiberal* and *unjuſt*. So much for news-paper juſtice and conſiſtency!

Ere we finally diſmiſs this ſubject, we muſt obſerve, that Mrs. Mattocks, in her perſonification of *Rachel Starch*, is by far too pert and flippant for the quaker-character.

Who nearly brings to an *(d)* untimely end
His own, and eke the offspring of his friend!
Who

(*b*) — feci quod et IPSE benignus.
Every theatrical production, unleſs it be a downright outrage of good-manners and good-taſte, ought, in my opinion, to claim a fair, candid, and perfect hearing.

(*c*) Nothing can be more unworthy the character of a *Wiſe-Man*, and, conſidered in relation to its *actual*, but eſpecially its *probable* conſequences, more unjuſtifiable, than that part of the *Elder Clarenceforth's* (the pretended *Ava Thoana*) conduct, which conſtitutes the leading incident, whereon hinges the entire plot of the New Comedy. His houſe happening to be burnt down the very night, in the evening of which *Metland* puts into his hands his whole fortune amounting to 12000l. (but for which the other is too buſy to give a *receipt*, though not too buſy to pocket the money) and the old fellow narrowly eſcaping with his life, by means of ſome under-ground communication known only to himſelf (perhaps he got into the common-ſewer!) this *wiſe-man*, to indulge a ſilly whim of running about the town *incog* paſſes a whole twelve-month for dead. His ſon of courſe, as the lawful heir, comes into immediate poſſeſſion of his eſtate; and takes upon himſelf the whole management of his father's mercantile concerns, which we are given to underſtand, are of the moſt extenſive nature, but which the folly and diſſipated courſes of this thoughtleſs young man ſeem likely very ſoon to reduce to utter ruin. In the mean time, *Metland* having received no vouchers for his

12000l.

Who, like grimalkin ſcenting out a mouſe,
Dodges (*c*) his hopeful ſon from houſe to houſe:
On

12000l. is involved in the deepeſt diſtreſs, and obliged to turn hackney-writer in his old age to keep himſelf and wife from ſtarvation. But the profits of his penmanſhip not being adequate to his ſupport, the deficiency muſt be made good by a proportion of the pay of his ſon, who is an enſign in the army, and the wages of his daughter, who is waiting-maid to a lady of quality, The *wise-man* all this time is well-informed of the diſtreſs under which his dear friend *Metland* labours, and which, indeed, is entirely owing to his own whim of paſſing for dead, without returning his friend's money, or furniſhing him with documents to ſubſtantiate his claim; but he very *wiſely* conſiders, that any friendly interference of this kind would defeat his mad ſcheme of being reputed dead, and therefore leaves the *Metlands* to ſtruggle with poverty and wretchedneſs as well as they can. Such, I ſuppoſe, is Kotzebue's ſublime conception of wiſdom!

(*c*) On the firſt repreſentation of the New Comedy, the cataſtrophe here alluded to, was within a very ace of being accompliſhed; *Ellen* having actually, in conſequence of the abandoned conduct of the *wise-man's* ſon towards her, thrown herſelf into the Thames; whence, in the very nick of time, ſhe is reſcued by the old conjuror. The ſon, on receiving the intelligence, reſolves to add ſuicide to his other crimes, from which he is only diſſuaded by the *Jang-*

froid

On trifling cauſes, ſtill renews his ſearch ;
But when moſt wanted leaves him in the lurch !
Then laſtly, in the very nick of time ;
The lady (*f*) mad ; the ſon involv'd in crime ;
The elder *Metlands* raving for deſpair,
And enſign *Charles* for—*Ruth*, the quaker fair!
Cloſes the farce, by throwing off diſguiſe ;
Bids *Ellen*, like himſelf, from (*g*) death ariſe !
And wedlock's Gordian-knot between two couples ties.

But

---

froid of *Timothy Starch*, who aſks him, in what burying-ground he means to have his carcaſe interred? (after blowing out his brains) and who are to be his pall-bearers? The body of *Ellen* was on the firſt night exhibited, newly taken out of the river, on a ſhutter; but the diſguſtfulneſs of the ſcene, added to the abſurdity of preaching over the poor girl for nearly an hour, inſtead of putting in practice the mode of treatment recommended in ſuch caſes by the *Humane Society*, being too glaring to paſs, even in a play *manufactured* from Kotzebue; this part of the farce has been very properly omitted in the future repreſentations.

(*e*) The *Wiſe-Man* expreſsly brags that he keeps a ſtrict watch over his ſon, and hunts him out every where; and yet at the moſt critical moment, when his ſon takes the diſhonourable ſtep, which leads to all the miſery ſet forth in the preceding note;—

But whether Dad avows himſelf too late?
Whether the ſon reſtores the ſire's eſtate?
Or keeps it—now that Dad beſtows a bride—
For *lyings-in* and *chriſtenings* to provide?
The drama ſays not—nor can I decide.

Shall

---

note;—a ſtep, of which the father is in a great meaſure apprized—the old *wife-acre*, with his uſual unwillingneſs to prevent miſchief, does not interfere in the remoteſt manner to ſave *Ellen* from his ſon's baſeneſs, though he afterwards explicitly declares, that he knew of his taking her to a *houſe of ill fame!* But the *great genius* of Kotzebue is inadequate to the taſk of depicting a ſcene of exquiſite diſtreſs, without paving the way to it by the moſt flagrant abſurdities, inconſiſtencies, and contradictions! We cannot help animadverting in this place on the incongruous blunder, (for it deſerves no other name) which Kotzebue commits, by making *Ellen*, after repeatedly and ſolemnly refuſing to tell her name to *Clarenceforth*, permit that young man to be her companion in the coach; which, had it taken *Ellen* to the place whither ſhe herſelf directed, muſt immediately have revealed, not only the name, but the reſidence and circumſtances of her family,

(*f*) It having been found inconvenient in the repreſentation, for *Ellen* to throw herſelf into the water; recourſe is had to a milder ſubſtitute; and ſhe now goes *mad*, inſtead of *drowning* herſelf.

Shall ſuch a man for wiſe and prudent paſs,
Becauſe a lion's ſkin bedecks the aſs!
Is then his folly, or his crime the leſs,
Becauſe the dotard wears a ſage's dreſs?
What!—though he wield his cane with graceful eaſe?
Emblem of cane *Theurgick*, fraught with (*h*) cheeſe!

(*g*) Scarcely half an hour before *Ellen's* tranſlation from a *ſick-bed* to the happy ſtate of a *bride*, the *wiſe-man* informs us that the phyſicians have given her up; the lady being, as we before remarked, mad, with reſpect to her mind; and her bodily frame having ſuſtained nearly an equal ſhock.

(*h*) Inſtead of a ſtaff, the *Magi* carried a cane, the top of which was hollow, for the purpoſe of containing their diet, conſiſting chiefly of herbs and cheeſe. MUNDEN, who generally is remarkable for dreſſing his characters well, appears with a large cane in his hand, the top of which comes nearly to the level of his noſe: but whether it is furniſhed with cheeſe, we cannot pretend to ſay.

It is unneceſſary to add, that none of the harmleſs pleaſantry in which we have indulged in our ſtrictures upon this pretended *Wiſe Man*, are intended to convey the ſlighteſt ſarcaſm on the reſpectable performer, who perſonates the character of *Ava Thoana*. Mr. MUNDEN, in our opinion,

is

What !—though as rites (*i*) initiative require,
He pafs'd through burnings, and was purg'd by fire ?
What !—though obfervant of prophetic lay
The old *wife-acre* (*k*) fnatch'd himfelf away ?
What !—though deliver'd from the fcorching flame,
He dropt his own, and took a (*l*) barbarous name ?
What !—though he afterwards alive appear,
Like me, up-rifing from the funeral (*m*) bier ?

No

---

is one of the moft valuable actors the ftage can boaft. If, in his delineation of the *Wife Man* fome ludicrous *traits* occafionally occur, we believe this to be almoft infeparable from the confciounefs of the filly and ridiculous character he fuftains.

(*i*) Thefe initiative rites confifted of twelve different degrees of mortification, amongft which are expreffly mentioned, *burning*, blows, &c.

(*k*) This is borrowed from the Oracles of Zoroafter.

Εαυτον ο πατηρ νηπιαστιν.

(*l*) This idea is a *jeu d'efprit* upon another of thefe oracles.

Ονοματα βαρβαρα μητοτ' αλλαξης.

(*m*) Plato informs us that Zoroafter came to life again, after he had been dead ten days, and laid out on his funeral pile.

No adept *he*, to paſs the central ſpace,
Where * *un-zon'd* Gods the ſev'n-fold chain embrace!
Where ſprings the fount of light, which ambient hurl'd
Pervades the upper and the lower world;
No votary *he* of wiſdom's hallow'd ſchool;
To Reaſon's eye he ſtands confeſt——a fool!
Not even his claim to *cunning* I admit;
His cunning problematic as his wit.
With hellebore the moon-ſtruck idiot purge;
Give him clean ſtraw, ſtrait-waiſtcoat, and the ſcourge!

As little in your *Rake* can I admire;
The hopeful ſon of ſuch a hopeful ſire!
Gay, thoughtleſs, laviſh—that I freely paſs;
'Tis faſhion— faſhion too, to keep a laſs.

But

* There were two claſſes of deities in the Chaldaic ſyſtem; the *un-zoned*, who were of a ſuperior, and the *zoned*, of a ſubordinate, rank.

But to his vices not *one* foil appears ;
He's plung'd in baſeneſs to his very ears.
Hard-hearted villain !—can no honour bind ?
No ſenſe of gratitude control thy mind ?
Her would'ſt thou ruin ?—*her !* who wrongs forgave,
And comes, thy guardian-angel, thee to ſave!
Think'ſt thou, I'd give thee *Ellen* for a wife ?
No !—let me ſee thee firſt * reform thy life !

Next for your *Metlands*—briefly let me ſcan
Their ſeveral merits, and proceed by plan.
The mother, gentle dame ! is good enough :
The father much too teſty, much too rough.
I can't

(*o*) The proceſs of reformation in our ſtage libertines, is generally as rapid as the puritanical ſyſtem of holineſs among religious ſects; where repentance of ſin, pardon of ditto, juſtification, ſanctification, complete redemption, and God knows what elſe---are all the work of a moment. But, perhaps, this is inſeparable from the very nature of dramatic compoſition.

I can't approve his * language to his child—
Her morals blameleſs, and her temper mild!
Such conduct, as this language would proclaim,
Has many a girl confirm'd in guilt and ſhame.
And then his probity's ſo over-grown,
Poor, honeſt man! he dare not claim his own.

The ſon, a ſoldier, frank in ſpeech and thought,
Speaks nobly, as a Britiſh ſoldier ought.

But

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* From a firm conviction, that parental auſterity has frequently proved the occaſion of plunging a penitent female, who may have been ſeduced into a *firſt* crime, into a continuance and perſeverance in guilt, even for life; we cannot refrain from reprobating the language which *Metland*, the father, holds out to his lovely daughter, from the mere idea of the poſſibility of her falling into indiſcretion: "In that "caſe, (he ſays) neither to her mind or perſon am I a pro-"tector; nor is this *houſe her home!*" Is this the language of *enlightened* parental affection? 'Tis what we never ſhould have expected from Kotzebue.

But much the cauſe perplex'd me: why, the youth
Is ſo * bewitch'd with that prim ſpinſter *Ruth?*
Some anecdotes of former days ſhould tell,
How firſt they met, and *why* in love they fell.
But here the author leaves us in the dark—
Perhaps they ſtroll'd together in the Park;
Perhaps, his ſcarlet-coat the damſel fir'd,
And he the damſel's prudiſh dreſs admir'd.
Perhaps, they found it rather warm above!
So drank a *ſillibub*, and then made love!
As to congenial *hearts*, that kindly beat
In uniſon, and ſympathetic meet,
No proof of that, no ſymptom can we trace,
I fear, they only know each other's *face!*

This

---

* We have already amply animadverted on the inſipidity of the under-plot in this ſtrange comedy: we ſhall therefore, in this place only remark, that the author leaves us totally in the dark as to the baſis on which young *Morland's* paſſion for *Ruth* is founded; nor do we receive the ſlighteſt information how they firſt came into habits of intimacy.

This ſinks his character;—nor does the eaſe
With which he yields to * *Rachel's* meanneſs
pleaſe;
Nor—when he ſeeks his rival to entrap,
Is this, methinks, a feather in his cap.

Ellen, I own, is my peculiar care;
Ellen is all that's lovely! all that's fair!
No ſpot, no blemiſh—'tis a perfect whole;
Not ſnow more pure, and *virgin* is her ſoul!
Tender and gentle, as the voice of love!
And innocent and guileleſs as the dove!
Graceful in action, and in thought refin'd;
She looks of heav'n! and heav'n adorns her
mind!

Speaks,

---

* This alludes to the plot, into which the mother of *Ruth* inveigles the lover of that lady, to extort a bond of 5000l. from *Clarenceforth*, as a compenſation for a breach of marriage. This diſgraceful ſcene is, with reſpect to its principal features, omitted ſince the firſt repreſentation.

Speaks, as when cherubs breathe their ſofteſt notes,
And borne on ſpicy gales the muſic floats!
*Sweet, lovely angel!—late may kindred ſkies
Reclaim thee back from our admiring eyes!

Your *Lady Mary*—griev'd I am to ſay,
That "ſuch things are!" ſupports her rank by *play!*

A *titled-*

---

† The *author* ſpeaks in theſe two lines. Such lapſes will occaſionally occur.

We would juſt remark, with all due ſubmiſſion to the ſuperior judgment of the other ſex, whoſe authority muſt be acknowledged *paramount* in caſes of this nature, that *Ellen's* dreſs does not to us appear ſufficiently faſhionable for a female, who is promoted to the honourable poſt of being companion to a lady of quality.—*Lady Mary Diamond* expreſsly mentions that ſhe ſuffers *Ellen* to ride by her ſide through the ſtreets; and according to her own declaration makes uſe of her as a *decoy duck* to inveigle by her attractions young men of fortune to her card-parties. *Ellen* is habited too much in the ſtyle of a common waiting-woman.

A *titled-Sharper*, loſt to virtuous ſhame,
Whom none, I fear, but * KENYON can reclaim!
But then her portrait is not ſtrictly true;
Her † proxy better acts, than INCHBALD drew.
When ſhe attempts my *Ellen* to ‡ beguile,
Her want of penetration bids me ſmile.

Thinks

---

* Lord *Kenyon's* declaration on this ſubject, in the courſe of certain trials of no very diſtant date, reflects great honour on his uprightneſs.

† Mrs. Davenport. This actreſs poſſeſſes the merit which in the theatrical profeſſion is no *common* one, of forming a right judgment of her own talents. She never ſeeks to ſtep out of her proper ſphere and line of acting. We conſider her performances entitled to conſiderable commendation.

‡ The whole of this ſcene between Lady *Mary Diamond* and the lovely *Ellen* is vilely unnatural. That a woman of the world, like Lady *Diamond*, ſhould after ſuch repeated proofs of *Ellen's* attachment to *Clarenceforth*—after her repeated refuſal to be an accomplice in ſo infamous a ſcheme of plunder, that my lady after all this, ſhould put into her hands the loaded dice, and the letter detailing the preconcerted plan of her lover's ruin—this, I ſay, is ſuch a glaring outrage of nature and of common ſenſe, that we are per-

Thinks ſhe that *Ellen*—ſweet and lovely maid!
Will league with *her*—her ſoul deſigns will aid?
Black as *My Lady* is; her ſubtle pate
Should better *Ellen's* look and heart tranſlate.
Your *Lawyer* has, what Lawyers want—a heart!
No wonder then he * blunders in his part.
But here no obloquy on you I mean;
'Tis well you do not comprehend the ſcene.

Bankwell

---

perſuaded no dramatiſt but a Kotzebue, could ever have entertained a thought of ſo mad a procedure. But this is another inſtance of the want of reflection, conſiſtency, and ingenuity, with which Kotzebue conducts the plot of his dramas.

* We believeit is cuſtomary on all occaſions, when a ſeizure of goods is made, for a ſecond perſon, beſides the attorney, (we believe a broker,) to aſſiſt at making out the inventory. But in the *Wiſe Man of the Eaſt*, where no regard is paid to cuſtom or propriety, from firſt to laſt, Mr. *Lawley*, the attorney, comes to execute this office without any aſſiſtant. We are happy to augur from this miſtake, that Mrs. *Inchbald* has never acquired any *practical* and *experimental* knowledge upon this point.

Bankwell is firm and ſtaunch in honour's cauſe,
And meets, whene'er he ſpeaks, ſincere applauſe.

Thus, Madam, as becomes an honeſt mind,
I've freely cenſur'd, and the cauſe aſſign'd.
I hope—relying on your well-known ſenſe—
My rigid candour will not give offence.
For nothing farther from my thoughts can ſwerve,
Than to offend, where moſt I wiſh to ſerve.
'Tis now for you—and ſhould your plea ſucceed
To prove me wrong, I'll gladly "Guilty" plead.

THE

WISE MAN OF THE EAST;

OR

THE APPARITION OF

ZOROASTER,

THE SON OF OROMASES, &c.

PART THE FOURTH.

THE matron half ſuppreſs'd a riſing ſigh,
And wip'd a trembling drop that dimm'd her eye,
Then, gath'ring courage, nobly ſcorns to yield,
Nor doubts by ſtratagem to keep the field.

For,

For, as tranſlator, well ſhe knew the art,
To ſhift her ground, and play a double part;
To veer with ev'ry wind, and ride the ſtorm,
Like Proteus, changing into ev'ry form.
The magic buckler of her German friend
Will ſerve—or to *attack*, or to *defend!*

I own—ſhe cries—ſome faults my *play* may ſhow;
" * The ſmalleſt ſpeck is viſible on ſnow!"
Some little peccadillos may be ſeen,
For crows to peck at, and for dogs to glean.
Some huſks of bran may paſs my *upper* ſieve;
How elſe could editors and critics live?
How elſe could poets and reviewers dine,
Did they not feed on huſks, and meſs with ſwine?
Some puckers, out of plait, may ſeem to ſay:
'Tis but the *court-dreſs* of a *German-play!*

Some

* See GAY's Fables.

Some inconſiſtencies may bring to light,
'Tis not ſo good a play as *I* could write.
But, why at ſuch remarks ſhould I repine?
Theſe are the *author's* eye-ſores, and not *mine!*
If I have done, with my transforming quill,
All that was poſſible for mortal ſkill!
If I have rigg'd—and who will this diſpute?
My German author in a *birth-day* ſuit!
Have turn'd his coat, its ruſty hue to hide,
And, where I found a hole, a patch ſupplied!
New-trimm'd his tarniſh'd lace with careful hand!
His hoſe new-garter'd, and new-crimpt his band!
Brought him to court—I mean upon the ſtage,
Myſelf his ſquire-attendant, and his page!
If well-receiv'd, he there in favour grows,
And gives the heart-ache to his rival beaux!
If nightly to his levee London flocks,
And ladies *worry* BRANDON for a box!
If, through my means, the treaſury fills amain,
And Covent-Garden beggars Drury-Lane!

If

If fam'd *Pizarro*, to prevent defeat,
Muſt ſound to arms, and bid his forces meet:
But, ſpite of all his vap'ring, in diſgrace
Turns tail, whene'er my hero ſhows his face!
Though, * not one flouriſh, or of trump or drums,
Tells to the gaping crowd a hero comes!
If, in the tug of war, when Greek meets Greek,
He act, what modeſty forbids to ſpeak!
What more can man require beneath the ſun,
Where nothing's new?—yet this has INCHBALD done!

She ceas'd—and, ſure of triumph, from her eye
Shot conſcious glances, which the ſage defy.

No

---

* See the Prologue to the *Wiſe Man of the Eaſt*.

No doubt—what elſe could ZOROASTER do?
He'll "*Guilty*" plead, and crave her pardon too.
So thought the dame—and on her gentle tongue
A ſlight reproof for his preſumption hung.

But, as ſhe views him with intenſer gaze,
She ſees no ſigns of penitent amaze.
Rather his looks a mind reſolv'd proclaim,
And thus the Indian Sire harangu'd the dame.

Hope not, with ſtudied and with artful ſpeech,
One artful as yourſelf to over-reach.
Think'ſt thou beneath this flimſy, thin diſguiſe
To veil thy ſophiſtry from ſearching eyes?
Think'ſt thou I ever will the plea admit,
Which faults diſclaims, but arrogates the wit?

Which,

Which, ſhuffling like your CUNNING MAN,
would own,
Not *all* the maſs, but to the *gold* alone?
If you, for *dreſſing* foreign plays renown'd,
Miſtake for real fame an empty ſound:
If, by the gen'ral phrenzy, *you* miſled,
Miſtake an *addle-pate* for **Shakſpeare's head!*
Employ your talents on a worthleſs theme,
And ſhut your eyes, becauſe your neighbours
dream.
As your's th' expected profit; your's the fame;
Be your's the cenſure likewiſe, your's the
ſhame.
If, or your need conſulting, or your eaſe,
You chooſe to fatten on another's lees;
Take

---

* I have already, in a former note, animadverted on the tit of *The German Shakeſpeare*, beſtowed with ſo little r n, by certain pretended critics of this country upon J ebue, whoſe chief merit, in my opinion, appears to be tigable fecundity, and an inſatiable *cacoethes ſcri-*
.

Take ſweet and ſour alike, nor deem it hard
To ſhare the various fortunes of your bard.
For, be this truth to all play-mongers known,
Whatever you * adopt, becomes your own.

One friendly caution more, ere yet the light
Dawns on the globe, and bids me wing my flight;
Poſſeſs'd of talents, which, with frugal gift,
Nature beſtows—thoſe talents uſe with thrift.
On foreign dulneſs ſcorn your wit to waſte,
Nor ſanction with your pen a vicious taſte.
Truſt to your native powers, and let your page,
With native humour fraught, enrich the ſtage;
Leave thoſe, whom *Fate* for ſervile toils ordains,
To threſh the litter of another's brains.

Whilſt

* This is a hint, which I would beg leave to recommend to the moſt ſerious attention of all our [illegible] German Dramas.

Whilſt nobly you to higher hopes aſpire,
And ſoar aloft on Fancy's Muſe of fire!
Prove to the world that Britain will not yield,
In arms or arts, to rival force the field!
That Genius ſtill can Faſhion's ſway control,
And vindicate the empire of the ſoul!

Thus ſhall your name to future times de-
ſcend
Rever'd and honour'd, as the Muſe's friend!
Thus ſhall immortal fame your labours crown,
Your works the temple of your fair renown!

But, hark! methinks the morning-herald
crows;
And lo! the ſky with deeper bluſhes glows.
Farewell! bright Phoſphorus recalls the day—
He ſaid—and vaniſh'd into air away.

FINIS.

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A DIDACTIC POEM.

IN FOUR CANTOS.

By THOMAS DUTTON, A. M.

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